

## Catholics and the Public School

REV. JAMES R. COX

**T**HE right to educate children is the natural and inalienable right of parents because the family existed before the state and from the family came the people and from the people came the state. The family is the foundation of the state, for while the family, as such, can exist in the absence of the state, no state ever did or could exist without the family.

Man having been endowed with reason, is constantly making use of that faculty to develop new methods of thought and action to make the world a better place in which to live. Our world, whether physical or social, has been greatly modified by means of invention. Some of the inventions are distinctly social. "Man is an institution-building animal," said Aristotle. That is to say, man is a social innovator—when he needs to be. Frequently, however, our inventions turn upon us and control us. In the estimation of some, our institutions have become our masters; institutions are everything, the individual and the community are nothing.

However that may be, the boundaries between the various social institutions have never been clearly defined, and the competitions among them for the allegiances of men, women and children have been keen, even bitter and deadly. The church, the state, the home, the shop; all these compete for the loyalty and the energy of us all. In recent centuries, the school has entered into the arena of this competition, especially with respect to the time and energy of children.

School men and women are greatly disturbed by the fact that the boundaries between the school and the other social institutions are not definite. They contend that if we could just get the community to agree as to what the work of the school is, we could proceed to organize that work in such specific ways as would advance education immeasurably, but the community will not agree as to the aim of education because the outlook of modern times on life is incomplete and disordered. In order to meet the inconsistent demands of the community, school men

try to prescind from the spiritual element in human nature and from a life beyond the grave; it hides purely material ideals behind "Training in the Proprieties," "Arming for Citizenship," "An Introduction to Society" and other such vague abstractions. We all agree that education is a preparation for life, but there are as many imperfect notions of life as there are colors to the thousand and one philosophic spectra.

#### THE REASON FOR PARISH SCHOOLS

A large percentage of the people making up the great democratic citizenship of America, have decided that the marvelous public school system of these United States, having omitted in its curriculum what they consider the most necessary of all subjects—the teaching of religion—is not qualified to give its children proper and adequate instruction. This percentage likewise disagrees with the public school system in its assertion that religion is a matter than can be adequately cared for by the parents and Sunday schools.

It is impossible for parents nowadays to give adequate religious instruction to their children because the law compels the child to spend several hours in the class room, the best part of a child's day, and when at home the child is busy with eating, sleeping and attending to necessary details of health and cleanliness. The school has in a measure taken the place of the parent and must not neglect to give the best that the parents formerly gave and that was the knowledge of God learned at the mother's knee. If the school takes the parents' place it must assume all the obligations entailed.

#### SUNDAY SCHOOLS

Sunday school is not qualified to give a sufficient amount of religious instruction for salvation for two reasons: (1) Religious instruction is not merely catechetical lessons, but it is education itself and education is life, therefore religion is the life of the child and is the sum total of everything he does, not simply what he learns to do. (2) Moreover if Sunday schools were qualified to give religious instruction they would not succeed because more than 85 per cent. of our public school children do not attend.

The teachers in public schools are not qualified to teach religion because they have not learned it. Would supervisors permit the teaching of mathematics by incompetents or those who had never studied their subject? The University of Pittsburgh has installed a course of religious instructions for teachers. Whatever means are taken to remedy the lack of religious instruction in the public school it will always be a problem to give satisfaction to all who attend. Various plans have been suggested and tried but few succeed. But it is not our duty to write about this phase of education. All we ask is this: Since we have solved our problem to our own satisfaction and are certain that our children are cared for religiously and at the same time we care for their patriotism and citizenship we ask our non-Catholic brethren who cannot solve their problem to leave us in peace.

Therefore, side by side with the public school has grown up in America, a system of Parish schools, in every way the equal of public schools, training its children for citizenship here and preparing them to reach the goal for which all men were created—the glory of heaven and eternal life with God.

This attitude has been taken because the Christian Church by virtue of her Divinely given charter, "Going therefore, teach ye all nations," (St. Matt. Chapter xxiii 5-19) is essentially a teaching organization. Christ commissioned the Apostles and His Church to teach what He had taught them and the lessons given and accepted by the pupils have succeeded in doing what all the wisdom of Greece, the power of Rome and the superstition of the pagan have failed to accomplish, namely the establishment of civilization with a culture that day by day grows stronger, better and more far reaching, a civilization that time cannot alter, persecution stamp out or pretended scientific knowledge supersede because Christ's doctrine is built upon the rocks of eternal and supernatural truth, reinforced by the girders of natural reason and science—all standing solidly and harmoniously together by the Cross of Calvary withstanding every upheaval of false doctrine in the religious or social order, just as great a bulwark against mobocracy as against autocracy. Teaching is included in her task of saving souls.

Primarily she was instituted to be the means of dispensing salvation, and to teach truths which are necessary for salvation. These injunctions are spiritual and moral and her schools were institutions for the purpose of teaching them.

#### RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Truths of science, of history, matters of culture, in a word profane learning, enter into the work of the Church by force of circumstances, when Christian youth cannot obtain a knowledge of them without incurring great danger to faith and morals. Religion being a supreme co-ordinating principle in education, as it is in life, if the so-called secular branches of learning are taught without reference to religion, the Church feels that an educational mistake is being made, that the "one thing necessary" is being excluded to the detriment of education itself. But religious instruction has other values. No subject, not even the whole range of the science is richer in wholesome food for thought than the Christian religion. The Sacred Scriptures abound in literary beauty of every kind. A more touching, more interesting story than that of Ruth is still to be written. The Odes of Pindar and the modern lyrics pale before the majesty of the Psalms, and what is the Iliad or the Odyssey in comparison with the Hebrew Epic or the Public Life of Christ? What is the Greek tragedy or the modern drama in comparison to the passion of the Lord? Greece and Rome were justly proud of their national heroes and rightly held them up as models of patriotism before the young generation, but their number and greatness fall into insignificance before the innumerable host of the heroes of Christian Faith, the benefactors of mankind, the exemplars of every virtue to be prized among civilized nations.

History has no greater subject than the Catholic Church. She is the connecting link between antiquity and modern times; she sheltered civilization in her temples and her cloisters, when civilization was threatened with total destruction; her influence at once deep and beneficent has been felt in every field of human endeavor; she is centuries old and yet is as young and full

of vigor as though she had been founded yesterday. With these doctrines serving as a basis, the Catholic Church throughout her history has established universities, colleges and schools co-existent with the church, and has taught the secular branches in such a manner, that religion is the centralizing, unifying, vitalizing force in the educational process. Here in free America, side by side with the system of education in the public schools has grown up at great labor, sacrifice and financial outlay, a parish school organization that is a marvel of religious zeal and energy, or as Archbishop Spalding has stated: "The greatest religious fact in the United States today is the Catholic school system, maintained without any aid by the people who love it." (Vol. xiii, Catholic Encyclopedia: Schools). The vastness of the system may be gaged by the fact that it comprises over 20,000 teachers, over one million pupils and represents a hundred million dollars worth of property, and costs over fifteen million annually.

#### PARISH AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The organization and maintenance of parish schools does not imply the condemnation of public schools, or opposition of any kind to the purpose for which these were established. Cardinal Gibbons and Archbishop Kane, in 1880, at a meeting of the National Education Association at Nashville, stated the case in favor of denominational schools and made it clear that in so far as patriotism and citizenship are concerned, the Catholic schools are aiming successfully at the same ideals as the public schools, and in addition, teach religion and religious morality. Bishop Edmond Heelen, D.D., of Sioux City, Iowa, presents the Catholic viewpoint very clearly and forcibly: "We are not competing with any other school or with any other system of education. We realize that knowledge prevails in the public schools. We have the highest regard for those in charge. We respect their earnest effort to promote knowledge. We, with our fellow citizens, acknowledge their achievements. In imparting the knowledge of the arts and science, the public school is quite efficient." (Pittsburgh Catholic, December 22, 1922.) The exclusion of religion in the

public schools is, in fact, the result of sectarian division and prejudice. About September 25, 1922, the House of Deputies of the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in session at Portland, Ore., formally approved of a policy of religious education in the public schools as a regular item in the school curriculum, by teachers of any denomination designated by the parents.

The necessity for this view seems to accord with that of the editor of the Omaha World Herald, May 4, 1923, which stated: "The World Herald believes religious training for youth not only desirable but essential. It believes that lack of it is a vital defect for which any society will pay a stern penalty. It believes there is lack of it in our own society and that today we are paying the penalty and the penalty will become increasingly heavier as the condition persists. And it is persuaded that the great body of public opinion holds to the same view."

Nor is the editor willing to comfort himself with the reflection that the home and Sunday school are giving the religious training which is necessary. He continues: "It is all very well to say that home training and the Sunday school may be depended upon to save the rising generation from atheism and Godlessness. But the truth is, they are not functioning satisfactorily in this respect. And while we may deplore the fact, and scold as we are moved, all the scolding and deploring we are capable of will not remedy the evil. Generally speaking, there is little or no religious training in the modern home. It is doubtful if 15 per cent. of the pupils in the public schools attend church or Sunday school. They are coming to manhood and womanhood with minds trained after a fashion, but with religious instincts stunted, the craving for faith starved. Religion plays no part in what they see or hear or experience. That faith should atrophy under these circumstances is the most natural thing in the world."

Natural or not, it cannot be denied that if boys and girls are for years subjected to a training which refuses to admit the place of Almighty God and supernatural religion in life, it will be only through a moral miracle that they retain any knowledge of religion or respect for

it. Whatever may be the influence in individual cases of culture and environment, it is certain that in the absence of religious principles, neither morality nor good order can long be preserved among the people.

#### A SUGGESTIVE INCIDENT

Nearly three years ago, Judge E. C. Crain of New York, "speaking as a judge of 14 years' experience in the Court of Criminal Jurisdiction," eloquently pleaded for some form of religious training to be given in connection with the public schools. The plea attracted much attention and criticism, a number of public hearings were held, but the scheme proposed by Judge Crain came to nothing when the school authorities felt themselves obliged to rule against it.

Judge Crain's plan was very simple. It proposed, first, that qualified teachers of religion be appointed by the various denominations and by the school board; second, that the children be dismissed for two one-half periods weekly for instruction outside of the school premises; and third, that instruction be given those children only whose parents had requested it in writing. The opposition was based chiefly on certain clauses in the State Constitution, which, at least apparently, forbade even this remote recognition of religion by the schools. This objection might have been met, but practical difficulties, such as lack of time and the impossibility of keeping in touch with the children dismissed during school hours moved the board to withhold its approbation. One result of the hearing, however, was an awakened interest in the vital importance of religious training and a consequent realization that the metropolis could not afford to tolerate a system under which the vast majority of its children learned little of religion and less of the moral and social obligations imposed by it. It may be remarked, incidentally, that if this defective training is a social menace in New York it can hardly be considered a blessing when expanded on a national scale.

Similar plans have been proposed elsewhere, but so far they have never been generally adopted in any large American city. Non-Catholic public opinion has generally regarded the proposal as an attempt by Catholics



"to capture the public schools," while, as a curious counterweight to this opinion, Catholics have not, in most instances declared themselves unanimously in its favor. Some Catholics fear that parents might consider themselves absolved from the obligations imposed by the Church's law if their children, while attending the public schools, were to receive religious instruction from Catholic teachers. But it is plain, of course, that Judge Crain's plan, and even the best work of a well organized Catechetical League could never be an acceptable substitute for the intensive work of a parish school.

#### CHURCH AND SCHOOL

It is not for the mere purpose of catechetical instruction that Catholics carry this great burden of financial responsibility in maintaining Catholic schools, but in the minds of ecclesiastics and Catholic laymen, there is a direct relation existing between the development of the Church and the development of Catholic schools. Without the schools the Church would cease to exist. Wherever Catholic schools exist, the Catholic faith flourishes—where there are no Catholic schools, Catholic faith is weak and short lived. The relation between Church and school has been so close that it is impossible to disassociate the history of the one from the other. The Catholic school is part and parcel of the Church's wide organization, and both in principle and practical working, it belongs to the Church's system.

The principle for which our Catholic schools stand are the same as those for which the distinctly Christian school has stood in every age and under every variety of condition. These principles spring from certain definite views about man and God and the relationship of man with God—views that are as unchangeable as Christianity itself, and are indeed of its very essence—that man is a moral being; that the voice of conscience is a reflection of the eternal moral law; that God has made a revelation of truth through Christ, outside of the natural order of things; that man is destined for another and more perfect life beyond the grave for which the life on earth has been ordained as a preparation—these are concepts that lie at the roots of Christian education. These ideas are



the foundation-stones upon which well defined principles with respect to education, its ends and scope and appropriate accompanying circumstances have been constructed. These principles have been held inflexible by Catholics and Protestants alike and will undoubtedly be stanchly held by Catholics whatever may be the development or condition of Christian education in the future. Here and now we will attempt to define clearly just what these principles are, as we see them unfolded in the gradual evolution and organization of Christian education, and more particularly as we see them expressed in the development of the parish schools.

Worthy education of the will is moral training and the fundamental idea of a Christian school, and to this principle practically all educators agree and admit that the building up of moral character is more important than the diffusion and acquisition of mere knowledge. Moral character is based upon the distinction between good and bad, right and wrong, virtue and vice. But where is the ideal of good, right and virtue to be found? Is it simply in the natural order of things—in the dicta of reason and conscience rightly informed by a knowledge of the laws of the outer and inner worlds? Is the ideal that of the natural virtues and no more? The Christian school answers "no" to these questions and says the ideal character is that set up by Christ. This ideal is the development of Christian character based upon the supernatural virtues and teachings of Christ, not distinct from the natural virtues but including them and much more besides. Christian education guards and guides every thought, act and habit which goes to make up a character, believing that "We sow our thoughts and we reap our actions; we sow our actions and we reap our habits; we sow our habits and we reap our characters; we sow our characters and we reap our destiny." (C. A. Hall—Hoyt's New Cyclopedia of Practical Quotations.) The ideal of character between the Christian and non-Christian school is therefore radically different. The Christian school is opposed then to that interpretation of the Herbartian doctrine in our modern day which maintains that "school discipline and instruction in the common branches, if illumined by the fundamental moral ideas,

may be the adequate means for developing moral character." (De Garbo—Herbart and the Herbartians, page 56.) It certainly was not the idea of Herbart himself that "school discipline and instruction in the common branches was an adequate means for the development in Christian character." It might have been debatable if the idea of moral character was simply that of the natural man.

### TRUTH IN THE SCHOOLS

All truth is educative; but all truth cannot be comprehended in the school curriculum. There must be a selection and since this selection must be made, the question arises, on what basis shall it be made? From almost every point of view it should be made on the basis of the intrinsic educative power of the subjects and their importance to the student's after life. Considered in both respects, religious knowledge possesses a very high degree of value to the growing mind. The apprehension and assimilation of religious knowledge is based upon the same principles as that of secular knowledge, namely, principles of identity, equality, likeness, causality, the esthetic and the like. The two realms, in fact, have many points of contact and in the understanding of the relations between God and the universe these same ideas control the process. Therefore, no foreign method is introduced into the methods of instruction by the addition to the curriculum of religious education.

There is in the mind of every child a substratum of religious knowledge and the appreciative ideas are not confined to the purely religious content of the pupil's mind. For when the work of religious instruction is rationally done, the religious truths imparted to the child are presented and linked in the closest relationship with the truths of the natural order. The Doctrine of the Incarnation, for instance, is presented in a setting of historical, geographical, moral and esthetic facts and the ideas which rise up in the pupil's mind to embrace the complex image will correspond to the setting of truths in the natural order enveloping the religious doctrine as well as the religious truth itself.

## RELIGION AND LIFE

It is here that the religious instruction in the school has an intellectual and practical value which religious instruction in the Sunday school or church can never have. In this way, an ever wider and more intimate relation is established in the pupil's mind between the doctrines of faith and the facts and principles derived from a study of the common branches. The supreme relation of man and the universe to God, the Creator of all things, is thus apperceived in connection with the relations of man and the other component elements of the universe to each other. A continuous process of co-ordination and synthesis is set up between the pupil's outer experience and his secular studies on the one hand, and his inner experience and the doctrines of faith on the other. A tendency is created to see truth in the whole, to see particular truths as all converging toward a common center, rather than the separate fragments or as divergent series that never meet.

Some object to religious instruction on the ground that it is based on authority, and that the principle of demonstration and verification is inapplicable to it, but the same objection might be made in reference to history, geography or any of the sciences. The study of truth in its relation to its demonstrable sources is properly the work of mature years and should be done in the high school, college and university.

No life can be regarded as rightly ordered which leaves out of account the supreme life or being in the knowledge of which the end and purpose of all other life is to be sought. A man cannot think rightly or profoundly about any single fact or thing without going back to the great central truth of God's existence, from which all else proceeds and upon which man bases all his relations with his fellowmen and regulates his personal actions. Without God and knowledge of Him, life would be useless and unregulated—a series of anarchical evolution—a survival of the unfit in every realm of human endeavor.

Sometimes it has been argued that the chief reason for religious instruction is to impart catechetical and dogmatic precepts to the pupils, but this is not true. What the Catholic church strives for is religious atmosphere

and religious atmosphere means the sum of all the educative influence of the school room outside of the formal instruction. We must take into account the influences of the teacher, outside of the teaching proper, a positive influence, though sometimes unperceived, which springs from the teachers' character, personality and general manner of life. A Catholic child is taught to reverence the nun or brother because she or he has renounced all that the world offers—sacrificed everything that the world holds dear, to serve more efficiently the Christ who died for all of us.

Again there is the influence of the pupils upon each other—the interacting effect of their views, characters, conduct, manners, as well as, in a remoter degree, of their respective home surroundings. There is the influence even of the school room itself, its appointments and ornamentations, objects of piety, habit of the nun, all of which may be made to speak lessons of order, neatness, virtue and religion silently, but none the less effectively, through appeal to the eye and the aesthetic sense.

The Christian school aims to turn all these circumstances to the attainment of its specific end—God. The efficiency of these methods is based upon well-known psychological laws, namely, initiative instincts—a thing to be copied—the songs, prayers and sacred pictures to be recited and revered and looked upon as objects of religious art.

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## Catholics and Education

### I

It is said: "Catholics are kept in ignorance by the Church, which is opposed to their being educated because then they reject her teaching."

On the contrary, the Catholic Church is foremost of all institutions in the United States in promoting education.

Our census for 1920 shows that Catholics in this country were that year maintaining 16 Universities with 19,802 students, 114 Colleges with 139,996 students, 164 Seminaries with 11,198 students, 309 Normal Schools with 10,544 teacher-students, 723 High Schools with

129,838 students, and 7,412 Elementary Schools with 1,795,653 students, or a total of 8,738 schools of all kinds, with 2,106,027 students.

In the maintenance of these schools the Catholic Church in the United States spends one-third of her entire income. Conducting them, are 55,000 teachers, of whom all but a few have forsaken the pleasures of home, family and society to dedicate their whole lives through to the work of education, for which they receive on the average less than \$400 per year.

Proof enough, surely, for any reasonable person, that the Catholic Church does not keep her members in ignorance and is not opposed to their being educated!

## II

It is said: "Catholics have been driven to make a show of education in this country because of the existence of the public schools, which have set a pace Catholics were bound to follow or perish."

On the contrary, the Catholic schools made an excellent showing before the public schools existed at all.

The first school in our country was a Catholic school, opened in St. Augustine, Fla., in 1603, thirty years before the first non-Catholic school, the Dutch Reform School, was opened in New York in 1633.

In Governor Benavides' "Memorial" to the King of Spain, made in 1629 and published at Madrid in 1630, still three years before the first non-Catholic school in this country, twelve Catholic schools then flourishing in New Mexico are enumerated.

Catholics opened the first schools also in California, Colorado, Texas, Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, Dakota, Michigan, Minnesota, Illinois, Ohio, Maine, Maryland, Kentucky, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana.

The first professional elementary school teachers in our country were the Ursuline nuns, who came from France at the request of Governor Bienville in 1727 and opened St. Angela's Free School in New Orleans. That school is going today, the oldest free school in existence in the United States.

At the time of our American Revolution, which was more than fifty years before our public school system was

started, no less than seventy Catholic schools had been opened within the present confines of the United States.

When the public school system was started and the first secularized State-supported, State-controlled "common" free schools were opened (in Massachusetts in 1839), the Catholics already had 3 Universities, 15 Colleges, 30 Academies, 7 training schools for teachers, and upward of 300 elementary schools in this country.

No, the public schools did not set the pace for the Catholics; they followed. Not only Catholics, but all other religious bodies of any size in this country were conducting schools long before the public schools began.

### III

It is said: "The early Catholic schools were founded by individuals, in spite of the Church, which never would have permitted them if she could have helped herself."

On the contrary, they were founded by the Church officially through her priests and hierarchy, who, with the sanction and encouragement of the Pope, did everything to promote and foster Catholic schools, most of which were supported entirely by Church funds, free to the patrons, and were conducted by Catholic teaching Orders founded and blessed by the Church.

Seven such religious Congregations were founded in our country, not to mention those that came from abroad, before public school teachers were known. The extent of the work of those seven Sisterhoods may be judged from the schools which one of them, the Sisters of Charity of Emmitsburg, Maryland, opened beginning more than twenty-five years before our public school system began, as follows:

Emmitsburg, Md., July 31, 1809; Philadelphia, Pa., October 6, 1814; New York, N. Y., August 13, 1817; New York, May 13, 1820; Baltimore, July 4, 1821; New York, April 30, 1822; Frederick, Md., December 23, 1824; Washington, D. C., October 4, 1825; Harrisburg, Pa., March 4, 1828; Albany, N. Y., September 8, 1828; Cincinnati, O., October 8, 1829; Philadelphia, Pa., March 8, 1830; Wilmington, Del., April 14, 1830; New Orleans, La., October 4, 1830; Washington, D. C., April 21, 1831; Brooklyn, N. Y., March 29, 1831; Georgetown, D. C.,

June 3, 1831; Boston, Mass., February 28, 1832; Alexandria, Va., March 2, 1832; Philadelphia, Pa., March 28, 1832; New York, October 30, 1832; Philadelphia, January 29, 1833; New York (St. Joseph's), August 21, 1833; New York (St. Mary's), August 21, 1883; Cone-wago, Pa., June 19, 1834; Utica, N. Y., September 11, 1834; Richmond, November 22, 1834; Philadelphia, Pa., January 20, 1835; Pottsville, Pa., May 15, 1836; Norfolk, Va., September 15, 1837; Martinsburg, W. Va., January 1, 1838; Vincennes, Ind., March 20, 1838; New York, August 1, 1838.

The work of one among seven, all before our public school system began!

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### **Defend Catholics' Right to Schools**

Following are General Resolutions passed at the Cleveland meeting (June 26-30, 1923) of the Catholic Educational Association:

A republic such as ours cannot be sustained without an intelligent citizenship. It is essential for the well-being of the Republic that sufficient provision should be made for the education of all the children of the nation.

Religion, no less than secular knowledge, is necessary for the worthy discharge of the duties of citizenship. It is not enough to know what is good and right; the will must be motivated to the doing of the good and the right; and the motives which have most cogent influence in determining the will to worthy action are ultimately based upon religions or religious principles.

More than three-quarters of a century ago Archbishop Hughes pointed out that while the Sunday school might suffice for non-Catholics as a means of providing religious instruction for their children, it could not suffice for Catholics. As a matter both of principle and of experience, Catholics have consistently held that it is only in the regular school that the Catholic Faith and Catholic principles of morality can be adequately taught to their children.

Even before the establishment of our Republic, Catholics had already built schools and laid the foundations of the existing widespread system of parish schools. The parish



school system thus antedates the State-supported public school system.

Catholics have built up their parish schools out of their own funds—funds which were contributed by the members of the Church generally. They support these schools in the same way. They thus pay a double educational tax—part for the education of their children in their own schools and part for the upkeep of the public schools. They have done this and have borne financial sacrifices involved in order to safeguard their inalienable religious rights.

Legislative measures to prohibit attendance at schools other than the public schools strike at fundamental rights of Catholics as men and citizens. Such measures would render practically impossible the instruction and training of Catholic children in their faith in accordance with their parents' obligations. This would be religious persecution.

Catholics regard the education of their children in their own parish schools not as a privilege but as a fundamental right. This right is based upon the natural authority and duty of parents. It results from the fact of parenthood, is anterior to the rights of the State in the matter of education, and would persist even if our present political society were done away with.

Denominational schools, like all private schools, represent the principles of personal liberty—the liberty of each individual to engage in any honest occupation or action which is not inconsistent with the rights of others or prejudicial to the State. The attempted suppression of such schools involves the gravest danger for our country, for it is, to that extent, a denial and an attempted suppression of the principle of personal liberty itself.

The records of the Catholic schools are clear and beyond question. They challenge study and comparison. As regards curriculum and teaching methods, our schools do not differ materially from the public schools. Catholic teachers are devoted to their work by a life-long consecration, and bring to their task not only competent professional preparation, but a personal zeal and interest which are strengthened and deepened by motives of religion. The products of our schools are, we believe, not

unworthy of the teachers or of the noble, self-sacrificing efforts which the Catholic people of America have been making these hundred years and more in behalf of religious education.

## **The Church in Her Schools**

REV. JOHN CAVANAGH, C.S.C., D.D.

*From an address at the Diamond Jubilee of the Diocese of Cleveland*

As the Church is the mother and guardian of liberty, so must she always be the friend and benefactor of education. She knows that a school which excludes religion from its curriculum is a fragmentary and imperfect school, that a program which imparts instruction about every subject in the universe except the Almighty Ruler of the universe is a faulty and defective program. But she knows, too, that whatever may be the case under other governments the free institutions of a republic can be preserved only where education is universal. It is not true to say that the Catholic Church is the enemy of the public school. Until the American people of their own free will, devise a more satisfactory system of schools, Catholics will ever be as they are today, deeply concerned about the schools where American children receive their education. We do, indeed, earnestly desire that a way be found in which spiritual training may go hand in hand with mental culture, but until the American people find a way to solve that problem the schools as they are must be generously supported. If every non-Catholic in the country were to clamor tomorrow for the suppression of the public schools without replacing them with something better, the Catholics of the country would still insist upon the support of the public schools for those who cannot accept ours. It is not true to say that Catholics either as a body or as individuals are unfriendly to the public schools, but only that for Catholic children something infinitely precious and important must be superadded to the public schools. This is true not because our children are better than other children, but because our Faith is better than other faiths. And, hence the Church says to America: "I admire your

zeal for education as you understand education, but I remind you that nimble minds and athletic bodies never yet made a great, God-fearing, enduring nation. My parish schools," says the Church, "cost me fifty million dollars a year, and if I could save that money and divert it to higher education I could establish each year a university more richly endowed than any University in the world. In fifty years I could have a great university in every state of the union, but I willingly make the sacrifice to save the Faith of my children, for the centuries have taught me that the heart of culture is the culture of the heart, that the soul of improvement is the improvement of the soul, that the making of life is more than the making of a living, that devotion to country must go hand in hand with devotion to God, that the great centuries, the outstanding centuries in human history, have invariably been centuries of strong religious faith, that faith watches over the cradles of nations while unbelief doubts and argues above their graves."

### **The School Issue in the Antipodes**

In the great island Commonwealth of the Pacific the issue of Catholic education is uppermost in current interest, as the following editorial from the *Melbourne Advocate* of June 21, 1923, indicates:

It is, unfortunately, very unusual for a politician to speak as the Acting Premier (Sir William McPherson) did at the close of his address at Wesley Church on Sunday afternoon, when he advised the Protestant bodies in Victoria "to get together with the object of establishing primary schools where the word of God might be taught without restriction." It is, as we say, unfortunately, very unusual for a politician to speak in such a strain, and we hope that Sir William, when he delivered himself in this manner, was speaking for the Cabinet of which he is so important a member. We also hope—we notice in the *Argus* report of the statement that it was greeted with applause—that the Treasurer was voicing the feelings of his hearers. However, though we hope he was doing this, we very much doubt it.

The term "Godless schools" is not a new one, though it is a very apt one. It has long been employed, in season if not out, by those in a position to appreciate the evils springing from the purely materialistic system of education to which it applies. And by none has its use been more hotly criticised and assailed than by that section of the community represented by the audience which listened to Sir William McPherson on last Sunday. That noble knight's advice to the Protestant bodies to establish "their own primary schools, where they could make the first feature of them the religion of God," because, inferentially, the State schools did not, may well carry to those bodies the truth and aptness of the phrases to whose accurate use they have so long objected. For, what they would not hear from the mouth of the prophet they may listen to from the tongue of the soothsayer.

The Acting Premier may very well indeed instruct the Protestant bodies to draw together and establish schools wherein "the word of God might be taught without restriction." For the result of the existence of schools where no regard is paid to such teaching is visible on every hand. The low general standard of morality, of which only too many instances occur in our midst every day, supplies evidence—too unquestionable evidence, unhappily—of that. Only the other day a deputation waited upon a member of Sir William McPherson's own Cabinet, directing his attention to recent criminal enormities, and suggesting more or less practical methods of dealing with the present prevalence of crime. But even the most drastic punitive measures and the setting into unexampled activity of all the involved wheels and pulleys of the law will, largely, leave the menace of crime where it now is. For the remedy lies only partially, if at all, in the direction of punishment. It lies wholly, or almost wholly, in the direction of prevention. For, obviously, no matter how thorough or extreme the punishment visited on a criminal or a set of criminals may be, it does not wipe out crime if it leaves untouched the conditions and circumstances which produce such criminals. The community must be made moral, if non-morality or immorality are to be done away with. And the community will only become moral, in the highest as well as in the ordinary sense, when the "re-

ligion of God" comes into the common life of the community, and is received and applied by it. And the way to bring this about is to begin with the child; to make conscious and vivid by early instruction the religious sensibility of the young. And no method of attaining this can be urged other than the replacement of "Godless schools" by schools "wherein the word of God may be taught without restriction."

Catholics, fortunately, have such schools. They have had them for long, and they have borne enormous burdens in order that these schools might be maintained. They have borne (and bear) such burdens cheerfully, for they realized, even before the member for Hawthorn did, the evils of the "Godless schools." And in this relation it is interesting to note a statement made by the Acting Premier on Sunday. "He had been criticised for his opinions on this subject," he said. "But when the State took money from all sections of the community in the form of taxation, no special privileges could be granted to any one denomination." To us the interpretation of this statement is obvious. We do not need to stress it, for it will be equally obvious to our readers. But we quote the passage because it shows a grievous lack of logic on the part of Sir William McPherson—a lack that destroys, for sincere people, whatever value they may have placed upon his exhortation to his Wesley Church audience to establish primary religious schools. For, if the establishment of "primary schools throughout the State where the word of God might be taught without restriction," is so devoutly to be wished, is there any good reason why the Catholic section of the community, which has already established such schools, should be penalized because other sections do not do their duty in the matter? There is no such good reason. And it would be more to the credit of any individual who proposes the establishment of religious schools if he assisted to lift the burdens pressing on those who have for years maintained such schools. If, then, Sir William McPherson is earnest in his belief in schools "where the word of God might be taught without restriction," he has an immediate duty to perform to the Catholic community. We suggest that he perform his duty!